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American negro slavery. A survey of the supply, employment, and control of negro labor as determined by the plantation régime. By Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, Ph.D., professor of American history, University of Michigan. (New York: D. Appleton and company, 1918. 529 p. \$3.00 net)

This book far transcends the limits of most histories dealing with slavery and at the same time falls short of illuminating certain aspects necessary to a complete portraiture of the institution. It is primarily an economic treatise presenting slavery as a commercial enterprise rather than as an evil which so deeply implanted itself in our life that much difficulty was experienced in eradicating it. Several important phases of this history are therefore neglected seemingly with a view to making a successful compilation or digest of numerous facts which have not hitherto been published.

As a history of slavery the book has adequate background in the treatment of the slave trade, the exploitation of Guinea, and the maritime traffic. The work increases in interest in that portion treating of slavery as a factor in the sugar industry of the West Indies and in the tobacco and rice culture of the plantations along the Atlantic. Some attention is given to the influence of the struggle of the rights of man on the betterment of the condition of the blacks, the subsequent change of attitude, and the difficulties involved in the prohibition of the slave trade. In the chapters bearing on the development of the cotton industry and the extension of the domestic slave trade the author has not given much more than has appeared in the works of several other investigators in this field.

He is at best in his treatment of the plantations. No one has hitherto given the public so much information about the management, labor, social aspects, and tendencies of the plantation. Much more, however, could have been said about the contrast between town and country slaves, about free negroes and the relation of those two classes to the poor whites of the south. More space should have been given also to the southern antislavery leaders who opposed slavery because it was an economic evil. While the book therefore is informing, it is for several reasons far from being the last word on its subject.

Among the author's shortcomings are his inability to fathom the negro mind, his failure to bring out the cycles of the history of slavery, and a tendency to argue to the contrary when facts seem to be unfavorable to the slaveholders. The facts of this book, moreover, are so arrayed as to indicate that the institution was in some respects defensible and that the negroes were satisfied with it. How can it be true that the blacks were contented when they from time to time resorted to servile insurrections

until the institution become so well established that resistance was suicidal? The author should not have neglected the uprisings which were common around Norfolk, Richmond, Petersburg, Charleston, and New Orleans during the days when slavery was reaching its most cruel form. Furthermore, although the slaves are mentioned as representing both persons and property the treatment lacks proportion in that it deals primarily with slaves as goods and chattels in the cold-blooded fashion that their masters bartered them away. In just the same way as a writer of the history of New England in describing the fisheries of that section would have little to say about the species figuring conspicuously in that industry, so has the author treated the negro in his work.

The book does not clearly show that slavery in America was first of a patriarchal order which later developed into an economic system. It does not bring out in bold relief that during the eighteenth century when the milder form of slavery obtained the condition of the negroes in this country was decidedly better than it was in the nineteenth century. The author has too little to say about the transition period when the industrial revolution resulting from the multiplication of mechanical appliances like the steam engine, power loom, spinning jenny, and cotton gin gave rise to such a demand for cotton and accordingly for an increase in the slave labor supply as to make slavery throughout the south a system of exploiting one man for the benefit of another. Because of this defect of the book the valuable facts contained therein may establish either the exception or the rule. For example, the statement that the slaves were content may be either true or untrue. It was true to some extent in the eighteenth century when they were well treated, was certainly untrue when slavery was changing from a patriarchal to an economic system, and was apparently true in the nineteenth century,—though in fact it was resignation to fate rather than contentment.

The same may be said about the author's treatment of the plantations. The life portrayed therein was characteristic of one period but not of all, in certain parts but not everywhere. It seems, too, that Mr. Phillips has not exhausted the study of the plantations, for many of the records cited are those of the most enlightened and benevolent slaveholders of the old south such as were never known to be the cruel and inhuman sort of masters who doomed the negroes to torture in the lower south. George Washington, George Mason, Z. Kingsley, Wade Hampton, and Jefferson Davis were certainly not of that class of slaveholders most numerous in the south. Z. Kingsley, for example, was of an unusually benevolent type. In contradistinction to many white men who sold their own flesh and blood in disposing of their offspring by black women, this master recognized his mulatto son, purchased an estate for him in Haiti, and

made it the nucleus of a colony to which he sent other emancipated negroes.

The author, moreover, makes certain statements which cannot be easily proved. Referring to the maritime slave trade, he says that "the food if coarse was plenteous and wholesome and the sanitation was fairly adequate." The best authorities do not support this contention. On page 306 he contends that in the actual régime severity was clearly the exception and kindness the rule on the plantation but supports his contention largely with the observations of two travelers, one of whom spoke of what he observed in all the slave states and the other who gave his observation of the situation in Virginia, where slavery was always of a mild form. The author tries also to minimize the prevalence of cases of slave women purchased by white men for purposes of concubinage and supports his contention with the assertion that in scanning thousands of bills of sale they exhibit little or no evidence to this effect (p. 194). An historian should not expect records of this sort to exhibit such evidence. While there were many white men who did not live above this reproach, the standard of morals among the majority was such that no purchaser would make a record of his desire to indulge in such a vice and the auctioneer would not always embarrass him by declaration to this effect. The reviewer has interviewed numbers of women of color, who assert that they were purchased and used for this base purpose.

While this book then is valuable because of the facts it contains, we must expect some other writer interested in this field to use these and other facts to set forth exactly what the institution was in its development from stage to stage and in its final form when it was exterminated by the civil war.

C. G. WOODSON

Lincoln, the politician. By T. Aaron Levy. (Boston: Richard G. Badger, 1918. 236 p. \$1.50)

Why is it that everyone who essays a contribution to Lincoln literature must needs make an addition to the vast bulk of worse than mediocre Lincoln biography? For such is this volume covering Lincoln's career through the election of 1856. Here in the same old eulogistic strain is a sixteen-chapter portrayal of the development of "the wisest politician in American history"; no wonder the reviewer of Lincolniana becomes more inclined to move the abolition of the superlative degree! Perhaps, however, one should display the same patience that the author applied to the task of culling his materials from the ever-expanding storehouse. Not that he has always chosen well and not that he has succeeded in presenting a well-knit synthesis. At times he would have profited from a more thorough study of the political background; of course "the Whig